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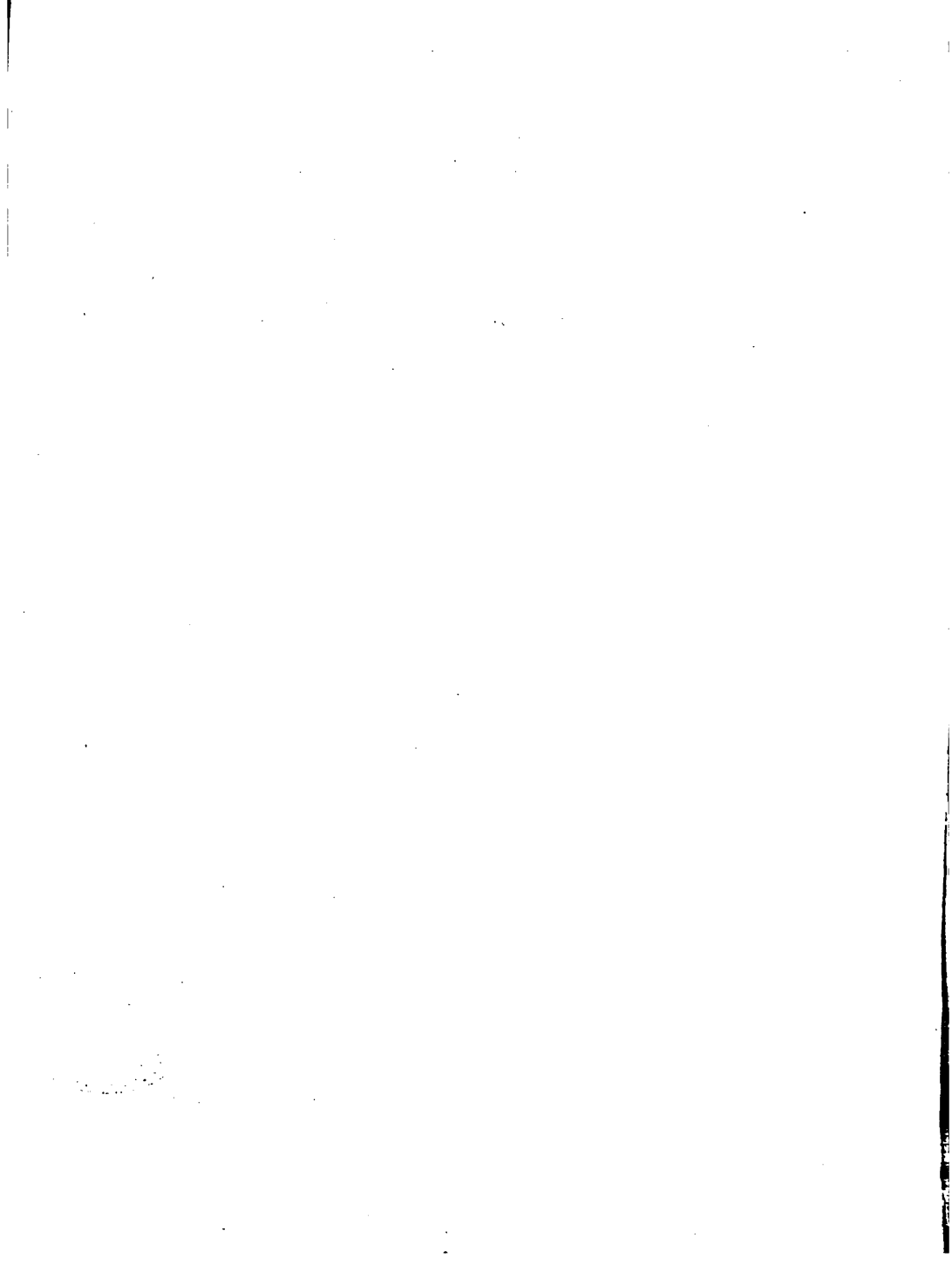
Moral Songs
By
Mrs Alexander



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Moral Songs

BY

Mrs C. F. Alexander

ILLUSTRATED



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MORAL SONGS.



THE SUNBEAM.

THE golden sun goes gently down
Behind the western mountain brown,
One last bright ray is quivering still,
A crimson line along the hill,

And colours with a rosy light
The clouds far up in heaven's blue height.

How many scenes and sights to day
Have basked beneath the selfsame ray,
Since first the glowing morning broke,
And larks sprang up, and lambs awoke,
And fields, with glistening dewdrops bright,
Seemed changed to sheets of silver white.

The ship that rushed before the gale
Has caught it on her bright'ning sail;
The shepherd boy has watched it pass,
When shadows moved along the grass;
The butterflies have loved it much,
The flowers have opened to its touch.

How oft its light has pierced the gloom
Of some full city's garret room,
And glimmered through the chamber bare,
Till the poor workman toiling there
Has let his tools a moment fall,
To see it dance upon the wall.

Perhaps, some prisoner desolate
Has watched it through his iron grate,
And inly wondered as it fell
Across his low and narrow cell,
If things without—hill, sky, and tree,
Were lovely as they used to be.

Where'er its ray has broken in,
Have light, and heat, and brightness been,—
So gentle love in Christian heart,
Doth help, and hope, and peace impart,
Nor turns away when griefs oppress,
But ever shines, and shines to bless.

Go gently down, thou golden gleam,
And as I watch thy fading beam,
So let me learn like thee, to give
Pleasure, and blessing, while I live ;
With kindly deed, and smiling face,
A sunbeam, in my lowly place.





THE LITTLE SISTER LEFT IN CHARGE.

SLEEP, little brother, you must not awaken,
Till mother comes back to her baby again:
Weary and long is the way she has taken,
Over the common, and through the green glen.

Up the steep hill, by the path that is nearest,
Thinking of you, as she hurries along,
Sleep then, and dream that she's watching you,
dearest,
Rocking your cradle, and singing her song.

In the still room there's no sound to disquiet,
Only the clock ticking, even and low,
Only the bird in his cage hanging by it,
Chirping a note as he hops to and fro.
Out in the sunlight the woodbine is stirring,
Filling the air with its fragrance so sweet;
On the low window seat, pussy sits purring,
Washing her face with her little white feet.

Far down the lane merry voices are ringing,
Comrades have beckoned me out to their play.
Why did you start? it is I, that am singing:
Why did you frown? I'm not going away.
Could I forsake you for play, or for pleasure,
Lying alone in your helplessness here?
How could I leave you, my own little treasure,
No one to rock you, and no one to cheer?

In the room corners I watch the dark shadows,
Deepening, and lengthening, as evening comes on :
Soon will the mowers return from the meadows ;
Far to the westward the red sun is gone.
By the green hedgerow, I see her now coming,
Where the last sunbeam is just on her track.
Still I sit by you, love, drowsily humming,
Sleep, little baby, till mother comes back.





THE TRAVELLER.

A WEARY man with dusty feet,
Came slowly down the village street,
And paused to look with wistful gaze,

Where, through the smithy's open door,
The restless fire doth crack, and roar,
For the great bellows evermore
Doth set it in a blaze.

The blacksmith has a six-year child,
A blue-eyed maiden coy and mild,
She saw the wish his look expressed :
And with her small white apron neat,
She dusted down the dark brown seat,
And prayed him with a smile most sweet,
To enter there, and rest.

The child brought forth the cup of milk,
With tiny hands as soft as silk,
She held it to the traveller's lip ;
And as he drank it thankfully,
He whispered to the maiden shy,
How far away his home did lie,
Beyond the mountain's tip ;

Beyond the river rolling bright ;
And he had far to go that night,
By barren hill, and wooded vale :—

The blacksmith on his hammer leant,
The boy above the bellows bent,
The fire died out ; while both intent,
Hung on the traveller's tale.

And still he spoke in gentle tone,
Unto the little child alone,

While glistened soft her eyes of blue,
"And art thou grieved because for me
The road outspreads so wearily ?
Child, better should I weep for thee,
Thou art a traveller too.

"Life's journey long, before thee lies,
In summer heat, 'neath wintry skies,
A weary way thy foot must roam :
For every one who treads the earth,
In joy, or pain, in woe, or mirth,
Is but a traveller from his birth,
And all are going home.

"Yet, on, my child, nor look behind,
But journey with an earnest mind :
God and His angels give thee aid,

Till the long toilsome journey done,
Thou see at last at set of sun
That distant country duly won,
And rest within its shade."

The old man rose, and passed once more,
With feeble step the open door,
The child scarce bidding him to stay ;
The blacksmith struck another blow,
The fire roused up, began to glow,
And still she stood, and murmured low,
"My home is far away."





THE VILLAGE WELL.

It lies some paces from the road,
A time-worn bucket o'er it hung,
The grass is greener round about,
Where, year by year, its wave has sprung.

Still bubbling upward silently,
Without a murmur or a sound,
You can just see the waters shine,
Down many feet below the ground.

The wood-work round its margin set,
Is grown with moss, and lichen grey;
The frame whereon the bucket hangs,
Has mouldered many times away.

And still the wave that springs below,
Is cool, and clear, and changeth not;
The weary traveller knows it well,
And there will rest at noontime hot.

The village maids at eventide,
Come there, the pitcher in their hand;
And round about the village well,
In lingering converse love to stand.

Still deep below, its quiet breast,
Doth never change, doth never move;
But from its lowly earthen bed,
Reflecteth clear the sky above.

The bucket when it breaks the wave,
Mars for a while the picture fair :
It rises up ; the shadow flies,
And heaven again is mirrored there.

The image of a holy man,
Who doeth well his earthly part,
Still yielding freely of his store,
To nerve the limb, and cheer the heart ;

Whose days in some calm lonely place,
Their quiet course in silence run,
Who never murmurs on his way,
Nor boasts of righteous actions done ;

Whose peaceful mind is sometimes vexed,
By care, or strife, or sorrow riven,
But as it settles into calm,
Is full of thoughts, and hopes of heaven.





THE IDIOT.

BESIDE the flowery hedgerows green,
I see the Idiot stroll along,
With nods and smiles, that nothing mean,
And wondering vacant gaze between,
And broken scraps of song.

Poor, silly man! he loiters by,
And in his hat, but lately culled,
A bunch of daisies nodding high,
With clover mixed, and tufted rye,
Out in the meadows pulled.

He shuns the common, bare and brown,
The village green with houses gay,
The mill-pond just beyond the town,
And all the places up and down,
Wherein the children play.

For some do follow him with jeers,
Or run away, and call him mad,
Or laugh and point when he appears;
They'd better far shed pitying tears,
For one so poor and sad.

For GOD Who measured out his span
Of limited intelligence,
Will surely judge the child who can
Torment a poor half-witted man,
And mock his want of sense.

He gave the clear discerning mind,
The eye so bright with reason's glow,
That pity there might dwell enshrined,
And love a ready tear might find,
To mourn another's woe.

That crouching creature sauntering there,
He feels derision's taunting tone ;
Perhaps he knew a mother's care,
Had once a home both blest and fair,
Though now he wanders lone.

Look kindly on him as he strays ;
Misfortune is a holy thing,
It meets us in our walks and ways,
To teach us sympathy and praise,
And grateful thoughts to bring.

Had Heaven not made thee what thou art,
Thou hadst been weak and lorn as he ;
Then meet him with no pride of heart,
Be gentle with him, take his part ;
God has been good to thee.





THE WIDOW'S CHILD.

Who is that gentle little girl,
That when the rest are all at play,
Breaks softly from the merry crowd,
And through the village steals away?

Why did her small lip quiver so,
When father at my kisses smiled?
Then faster still she hurried by—
It is the widow's only child.

Beyond the village stands her home,
Two paces backward from the lane;
The jasmine on that cottage wall
Has almost choked the window pane.

There is no hand to trim it now,
His idle shears are hanging by;
And she has hid his working coat,
Because it made her mother cry.

Once, when we passed along the road,
It was a joyful sound to hear
The strong man timing his hard work
Unto his whistle loud and clear.

But now, one woman pale and sad,
The white cap binding close her hair,
Is sitting at the door alone,
Or working on in silence there.

But when she cannot see her work
For tears that fill her darkening eye,
And when her heart is like to break,
For thinking of the days gone by ;

Close to her side, with noiseless tread,
Her little daughter draweth near,
And pats her with her gentle hand,
And kisses off the falling tear.

She cannot bear to leave her long,
She helps her in her household tasks,
Reads all her wishes in her looks,
And fetches them before she asks.

With her dark eyes, so like to *his*,
She brings her dear thoughts of the past ;
And smiles so sweetly in her face,
She needs must smile again at last.

So have I seen a sunbeam soft
Steal through a sick man's darkened room,
And make the weary heart within
Forget awhile its pain and gloom.

There's One Who is the widow's stay,
Who careth for the fatherless ;
Sure He will love that little child,
And bless her for her tenderness.





THE CHILD AND THE WIND.

"FATHER, father, are you listening,"
Said the shepherd's little child,
"To that wind so hoarse and hollow,
As it howls across the wild?"

“When I hear it in the chimneys,
When it sweeps along the ground,
'Tis to me, as if deep voices
Mingled strangely with the sound.

“Now they louder swell and nearer,
Now they fall and die away ;
Can you tell me, dearest father,
What it is the wild winds say ?”

“Nay, my child, they are not speaking,
Not a word the winds impart,
But each sound the Almighty sendeth,
Hath a message to the heart.

“And that murmur deep and awful,
Couldst thou catch its voice aright,
It might whisper, ‘Child, be grateful
Thou art safe at home to-night.’

“While for thee the red fire burneth,
Sitting by thy father’s knee,
Many laden ships are tossing,
Far away on the salt sea.

“ Many mothers sitting watchful,
Count the storm-gusts one by one,
Weeping sorely as they tremble
For some distant sailor son.

“ They might tell of Him Who holdeth
In the hollow of His hand,
Gentle breezes and rude tempests,
Coming all at His command.”

“ He provideth our home shelter,
He protecteth on the seas,—
When the wild winds seem to whisper,
Let them tell thee things like these.”

Thus replied the shepherd father,
And the child with quiet mind,
Had a thought of God's great mercies,
As he listened to the wind.





THE FATHER'S RETURN.

ALL the day long in the cornfield so weary,
Father has toiled in the heat of the sun,
Now the great bell from the farm-yard rings cheery,
Telling the time of his labour is done.

Far in the west streaks of crimson are shining,
Where the last sunbeam is just out of sight,
Slowly and brightly, I watched it declining
Through the old elm tree, all golden with light.

Soon will the night come, the darkness will gather
Over the fields, and the trees, and the leaves,
And the round moon will shine brightly where father
Reaped down the harvest, and bound the brown
sheaves.

Beasts have lain down where the bright dew-drops
glisten,

Birds have gone home to their roosts long ago,
Only the bat brushes by, as I listen,
Or the black beetle hums drowsy and slow.

Lay the white cloth for his coming, dear mother,
Set out his chair where he likes it to be ;
Close at his side you shall stand, little brother ;
Baby shall sit like a queen on his knee.

From the hard hand that has laboured so truly,
Toiling and straining that we might have bread,
We'll take the sickle that did its work duly,
Leave it to-night with the spade in the shed.

We'll hang around him with smiles and caresses,
Make him forget as we climb on his chair,
Toil that has wearied, and care that oppresses,
All but his home, and his little ones there.







THE LONELY FLOWER.

I SAW upon a ruin bare,
A little wall-flower growing,
There was no ivy creeping there,
No other blossom blowing.

But when the winds did rise, and fall,
And all was wildly swaying,
Then wide around the broken wall,
Came sweetest perfume straying.

I know within our village street,
An old man bowed, and hoary,
Sons has he had, and daughters sweet,
And days of strength and glory.
But they have gone and left him here,
In loneliness, and blindness ;
With but one little grandchild dear,
To soothe him with her kindness.

She leads him on, by field, and lane,
The paths he likes to wander ;
She asks him o'er and o'er again,
The tales he loves to ponder.
And still she heareth all he says,
And still her bright eye glistens ;
He knows it by the hand she lays
In his hand, as she listens.

'Twas sweet upon that ruin wild,
To find the wall-flower springing,
But sweeter far, that gentle child,
Around the old man clinging.
Mid broken hopes, and cares, and fears,
She stands in lonely beauty,
And brightens all his waning years,
With her dear love, and duty.







THE SWALLOW.

WHERE are you going, faithless swallow,
Fast drifting down the autumn sky?
Along the path I cannot follow,
Not even with my dizzy eye.

Why should you fly away so fast,
Because the summer day is past?

How oft when rosy morning gilded
Our roof, I heard you through the leaves,
Soft twittering round the nest you builded
Close underneath our cottage eaves,
Or watched your quick wings to and fro,
Before my window come and go.

While yet the early dew was drying
Upon the roses on the wall;
And in their clay-built shelter lying,
I heard your hungry children's call,
That pretty nest I never stirred;
Why should you go, ungrateful bird?

You stayed there all the summer season,
Till we like two old friends had grown,
And now, you're going, for no reason,
But that its pleasant days are flown.
Ah, swallow, it would never do,
If all my friends should prove like you.

For friends should be as true in sorrow
As when our hearts are light and gay,
They should not run away to-morrow,
Because 'tis sadder than to-day ;
But stay, and cheer, and soothe us still,
In hours of darkness, want, or ill.

But you would stay beside me, only
When summer skies are bright and clear,
And leave me now all sad, and lonely,
To wear away the closing year.
I see your little cloven tail,
A speck before the northern gale.

Go, summer and false friend, together,
And welcome, pure unselfish hearts,
The love that's true in any weather,
The friend that no misfortune parts.
I have no heart for him to share,
Who only loves when skies are fair.





THE WATER-LILY.

O, MOTHER, on the stream afloat,
I saw a water-lily pale,
Just like unto a silver boat,
Wherein a little man might sail :

A little man, if such could be,
No bigger than a finger high ;—
I stood upon the bank to see
How fast it would go sailing by.

I saw a feather carried past,
Dropped from the wing of some wild bird,
A green leaf borne there by the blast,
But not an inch the lily stirred.

The rapid current to and fro
Did rock it, at its own wild will ;
But could not make it onward go :
I marvelled how it stayed so still.

But then I saw beneath the tide,
Its root was fastened firm and strong,
Where eels, and slimy creatures hide,
And little fishes glide along.

So like an anchored ship it lay,
And though the waves in ceaseless race
Could heave, and toss it night and day,
They could not move it from its place.

No more of silver boat I'll dream,
By fairy man rowed toward the sea.
That rooted lily on the stream
Shall be a type of me, and thee.

O, mother dear, in thine, my heart,
So fondly, firmly, would I set,
The change that other loves may part,
Should never teach me to forget.

Still would I have one place of rest,
When life's rude waves shall rise and fall,
The love within thy gentle breast,
Shall be my comfort through them all.

The holy words that heaven-ward led,
Thy toils, thy counsels, and thy cares,
The light thy smiles around me shed,
The blessing of thy earnest prayers.

O, mother dear, the tide may roll,
The rooted lily will not move ;
And time can never change the soul,
That's anchored in a mother's love.





THE BOY AND THE BEE.

AN idle boy had laid his head
Down in a meadow full of flowers,
With daisy buds around him spread,
And clover blossoms white and red,
So fragrant after showers.

And as he lay with half-shut eye,
Watching the hazy light, came flying
A busy bee with laden thigh,
Across the blossoms growing by
The spot where he was lying.

"Oh, busy bee," the boy begun,
"Stay with me now you've come at last ;
I love to see across the sun,
Like gossamer so finely spun,
Your wings go sailing past."

But with a low and surly hum,
The bee into a blossom flew,
As if the living creature dumb,
Had answered short, "I cannot come,
I've something else to do."

"Oh, bee, you're such a little thing,"
The idle boy went on to say ;
"What matters all that you can bring ?
You'd better rest your silver wing,
And have a bit of play."

But with his sullen hum, and slow,
The bee passed on, and would not stay,
As though he murmured, "Don't you know
That little things must work below,
Each in his little way?"

I know not if the idler caught
This lesson from the busy bee,
But through his mind there came a thought,
As it flew by him: "Is there nought,
No work to do for me?"

"My sister asked me on the wall
To nail her rose's long green shoot,
The rose she likes the best of all,
Because the lady at the hall
In Autumn gave the root.

"Poor baby has been hard to cheer,
All day he would not sleep or smile;
I might go home and fetch him here,
And pluck him flowers, while mother dear
Should rest a little while.

“Go dive into the clover red,
Old bee, and hum your surly tune,
And pack your honey close,” he said,
Upspringing from his grassy bed,
“I’ll be as busy soon.”





WIDOW IN THE LANE

SHE has taken on the care
She has left me to the care
From the morning till the night
From the morning till the night

I am frightened as I'm lying
All alone here in my bed,
And I've wrapped the clothes as closely
As I can around my head.

There are birds out on the bushes,
In the meadow lies the lamb,
How I wonder if they're ever
Half as frightened as I am ;

If they shake like me, and shiver,
When they happen to awake,
With the dark sky all around them,
Ere the day begins to break.

But what is it makes me tremble ?
And why should I fear the gloom ?
I am certain there is nothing
In the corners of the room.

When the candle burned so brightly,
I could see them every one,
Are they changed to something fearful,
Only just because it's gone ?

Though I speak, and no one answers,
In the quiet of the night,
Though I look, and through the blackness
Cannot see one gleam of light ;

Still I know there's One Who seeth,
In the night as in the day,
For to Him the darkness dreary,
Is as bright as noontide ray.

And perhaps while I am trying
How my foolish face to hide,
There is one of His good angels
Standing watching at my side.

Then I'll turn and sleep more soundly,
When one little prayer I've prayed,
For there's nothing in the darkness,
That should make a child afraid.





THE CROW.

OLD crow, upon the tall tree top
I see you sitting at your ease,
You hang upon the highest bough,
And balance in the breeze.

How many miles you've been to-day,
Upon your wing so strong and black,
And steered across the dark grey sky,
Without or guide or track ;

Above the city wrapped in smoke,
Green fields, and rivers flowing clear ;
Now tell me as you passed them o'er,
What did you see and hear ?

The old crow shakes his sooty wing
And answers hoarsely, "Caw, Caw, Caw,"
And that is all the crow can tell,
Of what he heard and saw.

How is it, crow, that you can fly,
And careless see so many things,
While I have sense to think and speak,
But not your pair of wings ?

Because all things in earth and air,
That live about this world of ours,
Have their appointed places set,
Their proper parts and powers.

A different nature GOD has given,
To each a different law assigned ;
'Tis yours to build your nest on high,
And fly before the wind.

'Tis mine to walk the earth below,
To sail the sea, or ride the land,
With thought to ponder what I see,
And sense to understand.

We'll not despise each other's state,
But follow each our nature's law,
So sit upon your bough, old bird,
And croak your "Caw, Caw, Caw."





THE WINTER NIGHT.

THE snow is over all the earth,
But here within, the fire burns bright,
And we are sitting round the hearth,
So snug this winter night.

The fire-light casts a ruddy glare,
Where granny in the corner sits,
And tells us from her elbow chair,
Old stories as she knits.

And father mends the garden net,
Against the pleasant summer days,
While at his feet old Rover set,
Is basking in the blaze.

At mother's side my stool I've put,
As hard her needle-work she plies,
Still rocking with her idle foot
The cot where baby lies.

And brother with his fingers long,
Makes figures on the whitened wall,
And sister sings her sweetest song,
How happy are we all!

Perhaps, while we are here at rest,
There's some one struggling through the snow
Upon whose scanty covered breast
The bitter wind doth blow.

Perhaps, while in our glowing grate,
The cheerful blaze is rising higher,
There's some one sitting desolate,
Without a spark of fire.

Ah, what are we, that God has blest
Our winter hours, and made them glad?
While other hearts are sore distressed,
While other homes are sad.

We thank Him for this genial glow,
We praise Him for this pleasant light,
May He have mercy on their woe,
Who feel the cold to-night.





THE RIVER.

AMID the rushes green, and slight,
Beneath the willows tall, and strong,
Wave after wave, so fast and bright,
The river runs along,

The winter comes with icy blast,
The summer brings her scorching suns,
Day after day has come, and passed,
And still the river runs.

I see it flow ; away, away,
Along the same broad even track,
The waves sweep onward night and day,
But never one comes back.

And thus it is, time passes by,
Nor ever stops, for joy or pain,
Thus years, and days, and moments fly,
But never come again.

The shadows on the river fall,
The wave reflects them every one,
The bending rush, the poplar tall,
But carries with it none.

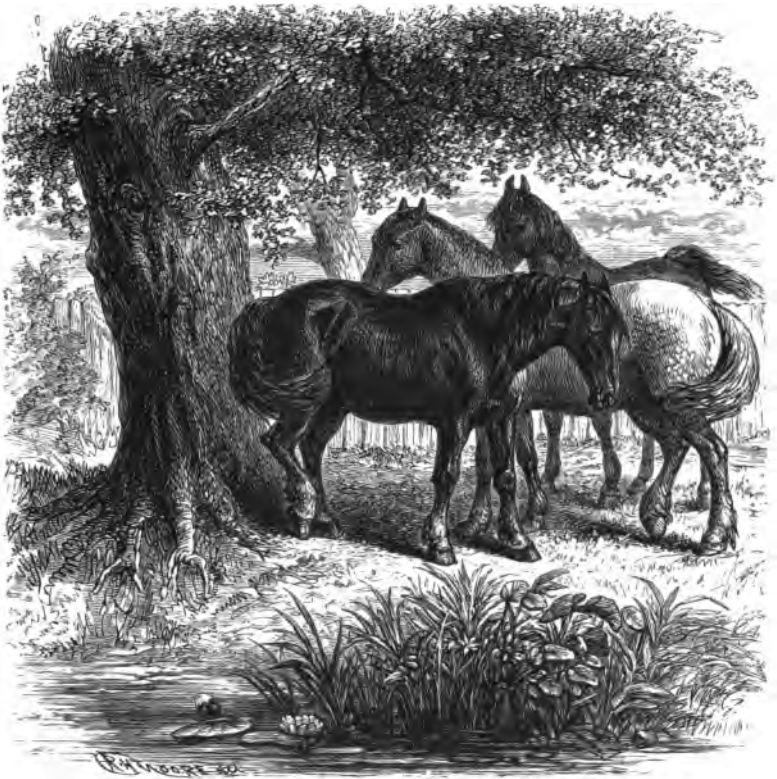
And every virtue, every crime,
Our thoughts, our deeds, our feelings, cast
A shadow on the stream of time,
As it goes rushing past.

The wave reflecteth sky, and tree,
Yet takes no colour, blue, or green,
But things we've done, can never be,
As though they had not been.

'Twas good or bad, 'twas right or wrong,
And He Who notes our every deed,
Has caught it as it swept along,
And marked it for its meed.

Then, as we watched the river flow,
Think we how time doth ever glide ;
And pray we that our lives may throw
Bright shadows on the tide.





HORSES AT PASTURE

BRIGHT upon the glistening meadows,
Night's first dewy drops are seen,
And calm evening's lengthening shadows
Lie along the herbage green,

Where those loosened horses wander,
Sporting in the pasture yonder.

From the weary yoke delivered,
Galling strap, and heavy load,
When the wide-spread nostril quivered,
Urged along the dusty road,
Through these pleasant plains they stray,
Joyous in one idle day.

Now, where tall trees hanging over,
Droop into the silent pond,
Which wild water-lilies cover,
Greener than the grass beyond ;
They stand still, with half-shut eyes,
Switching off the summer flies.

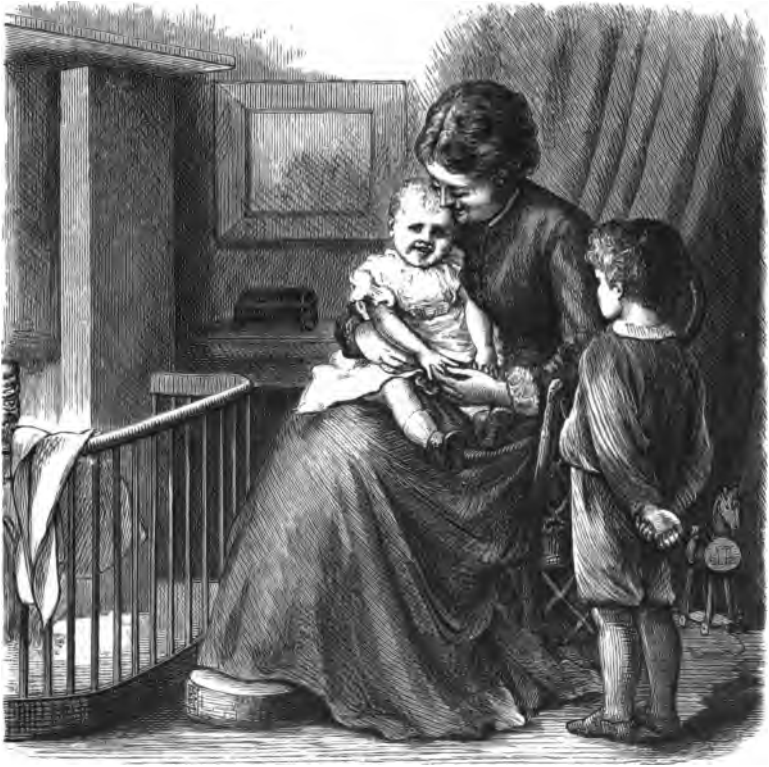
Round me now the circle closes,
Of their shy and curious band,
Rubbing soft their smooth grey noses,
On the paling where I stand,
Starting back with sudden fear,
If I try to draw more near.

How I love to see them idle,
Thus, to watch the joy they feel,
On their neck no tightening bridle,
In their ear no grating wheel;
Stretching, as the fields grow dim,
At their will, each weary limb.

He, for man's full use, Who giveth.
All His creatures bold, or coy,
Has endowed each thing that liveth,
With a nature to enjoy.
We, His precious gifts must use,
Kindly; nor in aught abuse.

Toil-worn creatures, if to-morrow
You must to your work again,
Shortlived be your weary sorrow,
Kind the hand that holds the rein,
And once more at set of sun,
Wander here, your labour done.





YIELDING TO ANOTHER.

WHEN mother takes up baby dear,
And sets him on her knee ;
And sings her song so sweet and clear,
Until he laughs in glee ;

I will not frown, nor wish that I
Were sitting there instead ;
And stretch my little arms on high,
And make my face grow red.

That would be like a selfish boy,
Who loves himself so much,
He cannot feel another's joy ;
And I would not be such.

For mother says, we must not care
About ourselves alone,
But freely give, or gladly share,
What might be all our own.

She says we must be yielding still,
And still to others kind,
Must often give up our own will,
And with a cheerful mind.

So, though he's sitting in my place,
I'll share in his delight ;
And when he looks into my face
And laughs with all his might ;

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I'll laugh again, like little stream,
Whereon the sun doth play,
That glistens in the sparkling beam,
And gives back ray for ray.

Smile on, dear baby ; I'll not climb,
To set me where you sit ;
My turn will come another time,
I'll go and play a bit.

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AWAKE AT NIGHT.

SOLEMN night broods dark and still,
Over wood, and field, and hill;
While my brothers slumber sweet,
I have climbed the window seat.

All along the village lane,
Not a light is in the pane,
In the air there's not a sound,
Not a footfall on the ground.

Only the white owl I hear,
Snoring from the ivy near,
Or the rustling of the trees,
Bending to the cold night breeze.

Or a cat goes stealing by,
With a step so soft and shy,
I can hardly hear her fall,
Dropping from the garden wall.

Night, so beautiful and calm,
Bringing to the weary balm,
Who all day with ceaseless toil
Plied the loom, or tilled the soil ;

Worn-out eye, and weary hand,
Rest and close at thy command,
And thou biddest gentle sleep,
O'er our weary senses creep.

Blessed He Whose constant care,
Spread thee over earth and air,
Giving us thy silent hours
To improve our wasted powers.

We could never rise by day,
Fit for toil, or fresh for play,
If we had not all night long
Sleep to make us new and strong.

Ere I turn away my eyes
From the star-bespangled skies,
From the dark trees clustered dim,
Let me think awhile of Him.

Ere again I lay my head,
Snugly on my curtained bed,
Let me praise His love and might,
Who has made the quiet night.





THE FIELDMOUSE.

WHERE the acorn tumbles down,
Where the ash tree sheds its berry,
With your fur so soft and brown,
With your eye so round and merry,

Scarcely moving the long grass,
Fieldmouse, I can see you pass.

Little thing, in what dark den,
Lie you all the winter sleeping
Till warm weather comes again ?

Then once more I see you peeping
Round about the tall tree roots,
Nibbling at their fallen fruits.

Fieldmouse, fieldmouse, do not go,
Where the farmer stacks his treasure ;
Find the nut that falls below,
Eat the acorn at your pleasure,
But you must not steal the grain
He has stacked with so much pain.

Make your hole where mosses spring,
Underneath the tall oak's shadow,
Pretty, quiet, harmless thing,
Play about the sunny meadow.
Keep away from corn and house,
None will harm you, little mouse.







WISHING.

“I WISH I was a lamb, sister,”
The little brother cried,
“It plays amid the daisy flowers,
Along the meadows wide ;

It plays all day so merrily,
And all the summer night
It lies down in the buttercups
Under the sweet moonlight."

"I would not be a lamb, my dear,"
The gentle sister answered near,
"Perhaps some day, the butcher's knife
Will take away his merry life."

"I wish I was a butterfly,
Then, sporting all the day;
With spotted wings so beautiful,
Out in the warm sun ray.
He flies to all the fairest flowers,
And tastes their honey sweet,
I cannot follow half so fast
Upon my little feet."

"His life is very short, my dear,"
She says with voice so soft, and clear,
"When one short summer's day is o'er,
The butterfly will sport no more."

“Then I would be a lark, sister ;
 Upon his soft brown wings
He soars into the breaking clouds,
 And there he hangs, and sings.
He soars, until he seems to float,
 A speck before my eye ;
It must be sure a glorious thing,
 To be so very high.”

Again she answers ; “Once, my dear,
When breaking day did just appear,
A hungry kite with cruel claw,
Killing a little lark, I saw.”

“Then what would you be, sister ?
 Would you not like to rise,
And warble with the sweet skylark,
 Or play like butterflies ?”
She says in the same quiet tone,
 “I would be what I am,
I’m quite content, nor wish to change,
 With bird, or fly, or lamb.

“Our happiest, fittest state, my dear,
Be sure is that we're given here,
And boy, or girl, we're better far,
Just where we're set, and as we are.”





RICH AND POOR.

THE rich man's home stands high, and fair,
With tall trees over head,
And winding walks, and gardens rare,
And wild woods round it spread.

Beside his gate stands snug and small,
The poor man's cottage neat,
With jasmine nailed against the wall,
And rows of roses sweet.

The rich man rideth far, and late,
Around his wide domain,
And servants tall his bidding wait
And take his bridle rein.

The poor man cometh home at night,
His spade across his arm;
His wife has swept the hearthstone bright,
And kept his supper warm.

Within the rich man's lordly halls,
Young footsteps lightly trip,
And there the sweetest music falls
From childhood's rosy lip.

And little arms as fondly meet
The poor man's neck around;
As merrily his children's feet
Along the red tiles sound.

The rich man hath his many friends,
And some are true, and dear,
His loaded board with plenty bends,
And they sit smiling near.

The poor man has his feast days too,
He spreads his frugal fare,
And neighbours kind, and friends a few,
Drop gladly in, to share.

The rich man has his cares, and ills,
That poor men do not know;
As snow will lie upon the hills,
When summer's down below.

And want will turn the poor man pale,
And need his soul affright;
As swelling streams will flood the vale,
That cannot reach the height.

But rich, or poor, one bond they know,
Each is his neighbour's brother,
For neither on this earth below,
Could do without the other.

Each has his pleasures, each his pains ;
The mean man, and the great,
Must bow to that which God ordains,
Who fixes every state.





THE FLOWER IN THE CITY.

I SAW a window dim, and tall,
Far down a city lane,
Full seldom could the sunbeam fall,
Against the dingy pane.

Yet mindful of things green, and sweet,
Some hopeful hand had set,
Upon that dirty window seat,
A box of mignonette.

The paint had fallen from the wood,
That bound the narrow ledge ;
The sooty sparrows came, and stood,
And twittered on its edge.

The crumbling earth lay hard, and bare,
Around the ragged roots ;
The little flowers showed dull, and rare,
Amid the stunted shoots.

But when the sash was upward thrown,
Mid all the dirt, and gloom,
A gentle fragrance all their own
Passed to the inner room.

The weary woman stayed her task,
The perfume to inhale ;
The pale-faced children paused to ask,
What breath was on the gale.

And none that breathed that sweetened air
But had a gentle thought,
A gleam of something good, and fair,
Across his spirit brought.

So deeds of love will cheer, and bless,
A low laborious life ;
So words of peace and gentleness,
Glide in and soften strife.

So prayers in crowded moments given,
Of tumult, toil, or woe,
Will sweeten with a breath from heaven,
Our weary path below.





THE SHEPHERD BOY.

UPON the mountain's sunny side,
Far up the grassy steep,
All day the little shepherd boy
Keeps watch beside his sheep.

He comes there, ere the red of dawn
Has faded from the heaven,
He stays there, till the first bright dews
Begin to fall at even.

The hours so full of change to us,
To him unvarying pass ;
I ever see him lying there,
Outstretched upon the grass.

The yellow blossoms on the furze
Do close beside him blow ;
He stretches out a listless hand,
And plucks them as they grow.

And sometimes the long feather grass,
With idle hand he weaves,
Or pulls the purple clover flower,
And sucks its honeyed leaves.

But still he lieth there, his face
Upturned to the blue sky,
And sees the broad sun wax and wane,
And marks the shadows fly.

The sun-bleached locks upon his brow
Wave softly in the wind ;
I often wonder as I pass,
What thoughts are in his mind.

And still I think that simple child,
Thus, far from strife, and ill,
Alone with sun, and cloud, and field,
Upon the wide green hill,

Has surely with God's wondrous things,
In closer commune grown,
And holy thoughts have come to him,
Out in the pasture lone.

He needs must think Whose hand outspread
That sky so bright and wide,
And carved the little blade of grass,
He looks on, at his side.

And when a shadow on the turf
Has paused awhile, and fled,
He deems, perchance, some guardian wing
Was folded o'er his head.

And when the gloom of twilight falls,
Just as he hastens home,
He thinks how angels in the night
Did once to shepherds come.

Still to his eye, the sunset clouds,
With amber tipped, and gold,
Are gates before a brighter world,
O might they once unfold !

I know not, if in truth, his heart
Thus glows with dreams of joy ;
But such, I deem, might well befit
A lonely shepherd boy.





MOONLIGHT.

'Tis moonlight over earth, and sky,
There's not a cloud or shadow seen,
Where in the dark blue heav'n on high,
The moon sits like a queen.

Or like a ship on some broad lake,
With white sails swelling to the blast ;—
O, I could lie an hour awake,
 To see her sailing past.

The trees, and fields, that wore by day
So many colours dark, and bright,
Now touched by yonder soft moon ray,
 Seem all like silver white.

The cottage roof was brown, and bare,
That now is like a sheet of snow ;
And glistens like a river fair,
 The dusty road below.

Wherever falls that soft moonbeam,
It colours with its own sweet light,
And flower, and field, and wood, and stream,
 Must wear it all the night.

So cheerful hearts have meekly lent
To common things of toil, and care,
The colour of their own content,
 And made them bright, and fair.

So spirits subject to God's will,
Take all He sends with grateful praise,
And bright, or dark, they see it still,
In love's own silver haze.







THE BEGGAR BOY.

WHEN the wind blows loud and fearful,
And the rain is pouring fast,
And the cottage matron careful
Shuts her door against the blast ;

When lone mothers as they hearken,
Think of sailor sons at sea,
And the eve begins to darken,
While the clocks are striking three ;

When the pavement echoes only,
Now and then to passing feet ;
Still the beggar boy goes lonely,
Up and down the empty street.

On his brow the wet hair bristles,
And his feet are blue with cold,
And the wind at pleasure whistles
Through his garments torn and old.

You can hear the plaint he utters,
Standing dripping at your door,
Through the splashing in the gutters,
When the wind has lulled its roar.

Little children playing gladly,
In the parlour bright and warm,
Look out kindly, look out sadly
On the beggar in the storm.

Speak ye softly to each other,
 Standing by the window pane ;
“ Had he father, had he mother,
 Would they leave him in the rain ?

“ In our home is peace and pleasure,
 We are loved and cared about,
We must give from our full measure,
 To the wanderer without.”

Little children of the peasant,
 Sitting on the sanded floor,
While the low neat room looks pleasant,
 And your work is nearly o'er ;

See the beggar passes slowly,
 By your lattice low and wet,
Ye are needy, ye are lowly,
 Here is one that's poorer yet.

Lend an ear to his appealing,
 Spare a morsel from your store,
Give him comfort and kind feeling,
 If ye cannot give him more.

For the full heart overflowing,
Shows its love by gentle deed ;
And the poor heart pities, knowing
Well the misery of need.





Still upward, upward, every thing,
On slender stalk, or soaring wing,
To us a gentle lesson giving,
That we should heavenward turn our heart,
Nor let the purpose of our living
Be bounded to its earthly part.

Because, above, a world there is,
A higher, happier place than this ;
Where holy men who die are taken,
Where sometimes little children go,
Who fall asleep, no more to waken
With us upon this earth below.

Then upward, upward, let us turn,
With eyes that strain, and hearts that yearn.
Nor ever, 'mid the cares and beauty
Of earthly toil, and earthly love,
Forgetful prove of higher duty,
But serve Him first, Who reigns above.







THE BLIND MAN.

SLOWLY down the village street,
With his dog, and with his staff,
Listening to your passing feet,
Listening to your merry laugh,

Looking with a vacant eye
In the face he cannot scan,
Feeling all he passes by,
Comes the poor blind man.

Green leaves glisten on the trees,
Pretty flowers grow down below ;
But the blind man never sees
Tree, or flower, or sunny glow ;
No bright ray for him has shined,
Since his weary night began ;
Little child, be very kind
To the poor blind man.

Glorious sights by sea and land,
You can look on, you can know ;
Take him by his withered hand,
Lead him where he wants to go.
Of bright things that meet your sight,
Teach him, tell him all you can ;
GOD, Who made your eyes so bright,
Loves the poor blind man.







THE OAK TREE.

LONG ago in changeful autumn,
When the leaves were turning brown,
From the tall oak's topmost branches
Fell a little acorn down.

And it tumbled by the pathway,
And a chance foot trod it deep
In the ground, where all the winter
In its shell it lay asleep ;

With the white snow lying over,
And the frost to hold it fast,
Till there came the mild spring weather,
When it burst its shell at last.

First shot up a sapling tender,
Scarcely seen above the ground ;
Then a mimic little oak tree
Spread its tiny arms around.

Many years the night dews nursed it,
Summers hot, and winters long,
The sweet sun looked bright upon it,
While it grew up tall and strong.

Now it standeth like a giant,
Casting shadows broad and high,
With huge trunk and leafy branches,
Spreading up into the sky.

There the squirrel loves to frolic,
There the wild birds rest at night,
There the cattle come for shelter
In the noontime hot and bright.

Child, when haply thou art resting
'Neath the great oak's monster shade,
Think how little was the acorn,
Whence that mighty tree was made.

Think how simple things and lowly,
Have a part in nature's plan,
How the great hath small beginnings,
And the child will be a man.

Little efforts work great actions,
Lessons in our childhood taught
Mould the spirit to that temper,
Whereby noblest deeds are wrought.

Cherish then the gifts of childhood,
Use them gently, guard them well;
For their future growth and greatness
Who can measure, who can tell?





THE CHILD TO THE FLY.

Poor little fly, you need not fear,
Nor buzz so fast along the pane;
Sport on—I'm only standing here
To watch without the falling rain.

'Twould be a very cruel thing
To lay my heavy hand on you,
To break, perhaps, your silver wing,
Or crush your body round and blue.

For you can feel in every part,
Poor fellow, though you can't complain,
And I should have a tender heart,
That would not give another pain.

The spider wants you for his food,
So he may kill you any day ;
But I should not be kind or good,
To hurt you only for my play.

Your little wondrous living frame,
Whose tiny limbs so nicely fit,
And move so gaily, 'twere a shame
If I should tear it bit from bit.

I could not bear to hurt you so,
I'd rather see you sport about,
Grown brisker in the pleasant glow,
When once again the sun comes out.

So spread your wings, poor pretty fly,
Like little silver sails unfurled,
Nor fear because I'm standing by,
I would not hurt you for the world.







THE OLD MAN AND THE CHILD.

THE old man sits on the green bench,
Beside the cottage door,
Beneath the porch of trellised work,
With woodbine covered o'er.

The village children on the green
Are playing in his sight,
The old man watches quietly
Their merry gambols light,

He watches with a pleasant smile,
But never moveth he ;
One little child of all the group
Has crept unto his knee.

“Old man, you bask upon the bench,
You never run or play,”
He says, “How can you bear to sit
So still the livelong day ?

“How very weary I should be,
If I were sitting there !”
The old man lays his withered hand
Upon the boy’s bright hair.

“When you are tired with sport and play,
My child, and out of breath,
Do you not sit upon the turf,
To rest awhile ?” he saith.

“And I have played a long long game,
And I am wearied quite ;
The bird that soared so high at dawn,
Sits on the bough at night.

“The sky at morn that gleamed so bright,
Grows sober grey at eve,
And yet the light fades tenderly,
The wild bird doth not grieve.

“As dear to me the quiet hour,
The calmness of repose,
As to your merry heart the life
That in your young blood glows.

“’Tis thus with kind and even hand,
Our God has tempered life ;
To youth He giveth eager joy,
And ardour for the strife :

“To mellow age its thoughtful rest
Of body and of mind,
The earnest gaze, the solemn pause,
Ere earth be left behind.

“ Then dream not as alone I sit,
A weary lot I bear—”
Lo, as he speaks, a burst of mirth
Comes ringing through the air.

The little child doth wondering
Back to his playmates run ;
And still the old man watching them,
Sits quiet in the sun.





THE BIRD'S NEST.

WHEN fading from our garden beds,
The snowdrops white did pass,
And violets, and primroses,
Come peeping through the grass ;

When blackthorn bush, and cherry tree,
 With blossoms white were dressed ;
Then robin red-breast, and his mate,
 Began to build their nest.

A crevice in the garden wall,
 Between the stones, there lay,
Whereto they carried bits of stick,
 And laid them every way.

About the hedges, moss, and wool,
 And scraps of hair they found ;
And made the inside snug and soft,
 And lined it all around.

Such curious things I could not make,
 With all my thought, and care ;—
The little mother bird stepped in,
 And laid her round eggs there.

Then o'er them many days she spread
 Her wings with feathers brown ;
And many nights she held them warm,
 Against her breast of down.

Cock robin sat upon the bough,
And looked so very proud,
And out he puffed his scarlet breast,
And whistled clear, and loud.

A little child his cruel hand
Put in the nest one day,
And stole the pretty spotted eggs,
And carried them away.

The birds flew round and round the place,
And perched, and flew again ;
With ruffled wing, and piteous chirp,
Poor little cock and hen !

But if that careless child had thought
How cruel was the deed,
How much he pained that pretty pair,
And made their bosoms bleed ;

If he had thought how tender hearts
Love every living thing,
And would not hurt the lowest beast,
Or bird upon the wing ;

And how the good, and kind can feel,
E'en for a bird distressed ;
I think he would have left the eggs
In robin's curious nest.





THE LOST FAVOURITE.

“It is dead, it is quite, quite dead,
No flutter at its breast ;
Without a stir above its heart
The yellow feathers rest.

" Its tiny beak is close shut up,
Its eyes are glazed, and dim,
Its wings hang down on either side,
It cannot move a limb.

" Was it for this, poor pretty pet,
I taught you, note by note,
Till I have heard the whole sweet air,
Come thrilling from your throat ?

" Was it for this, with finger light,
I stroked your golden head,
While you have seemed to love my touch,
And know the words I said ?

" For this, you learned to strut, and bow,
And many tricks to do ?
No bird in cage, or open air,
Was half as wise as you.

" O cruel cat, how could you lay
On his slight cage your paw,
And strike him through the silver bars,
And kill him with your claw ?

“I wish that some great savage dog
Would eat you up some day,
When you lie snugly fast asleep,
Out in the warm sun ray.”

“O hush, my love,” the mother said,
Who heard her child lament ;
“To teach you patience in distress
Your little griefs are sent.

“And you have lost your tiny pet,
I know 'tis hard to part ;
But you must have no vengeful thought,
No anger in your heart.

“'Tis pussy's nature to do so,
She did not think it wrong ;
Nor knew how very much you loved
Your own canary's song.

“Your bird is dead, but we are left,
Sweet heart, who love you more.
Then let them dig his little grave,
And give your sobbing o'er.

“ And cover o’er his burial place,
With pretty stones, and moss,
Then patient soothe your swelling breast,
And meekly bear your loss.”





VIOLETS.

THE tall trees rustle o'er my head
As I roam through the wood,
The squirrel startles at my tread,
And drops his acorn food.

The ivy green doth gaily grow,
And clasp the rough old trees,
What is there growing down below
That sweetens thus the breeze?

Close round the roots of yon oak tree,
The green moss peeping through,
Small tufts of violets I see,
With leaves so darkly blue.

As I have seen an autumn sky,
When suns were setting low;
As I have seen a lady's eye
Beneath her brow of snow.

I'll rest awhile in these green bowers,
Amid the moss and fern;
What lesson have you, pretty flowers,
A little child may learn?

I read it in your fragrant scent,
Your heads bowed down to earth;
Ye teach a lesson of content,
Sweet smiles and modest mirth.

Ye grow so small, so meek. so wild,
In this neglected spot,
Most like unto a simple child,
That hath a lowly lot.

Ye grow so sweet, your fragrance rare
Doth fill the lonely dell,
And cottage homes are blest and fair,
Where gentle children dwell.

The winds of spring are loud and chill,
The summer sun is hot,
Ye grow as fair and fragrant still,
As if ye felt them not.

And storms will vex the quiet home,
Of tempers loud and rude ;
There pain or grief perchance may come,
Or chilling want intrude.

But patience has a charm to meet,
And soothe the darkest hour ;
Good humour has a breath more sweet
Than any woodland flower.

Your lesson have I rightly read.
Mark lovers of the shade?
Then round my path your perfume shed,
And sweeten all the glade.





THE SKYLARK'S NEST.

WE rolled the green turf in the spring,
Within our garden ground ;
We rolled it with the roller stone,
So large, and smooth, and round.

We passed the roller up and down,
We passed it to and fro,
And crushed the little daisy buds,
And laid the clover low.

There in the turf her lowly nest
Had made a skylark shy,
Where she could stoop her weary wing,
From her blue path on high.

She laid her spotted eggs therein,
She brought her nestlings out,
There was she sitting snug, as we
The great stone rolled about.

She saw it coming heaving on,
With her bright restless eye.
Why did she not with wings outspread
Soar up into the sky ?

She saw it moving heavily,
Fast throbbbed her little breast ;
Oh, miracle of mother's love,
Still sat she on the nest.

Wide, wide she spread her soft brown wings,
Down, down she crouched her head,
The roller great passed over her,
We thought that she was dead.

For still she lay, her head pressed down,
And did not move or start,
With all her little nestlings pressed
Close, close into her heart.

Till scared at last, the two brown wings
Rose with a whirring loud,
Up, up she went and floated soon,
A speck upon the cloud.

We watched her fading from our sight,
And thought there could not be
A fairer type of constant love,
And wise humility.

For love doth hold the thing beloved,
Dear as its proper life,
And lowliness doth bend and yield,
When gather wrath and strife.

O Chasten that within thy heart
 Still nurse selfish love,
 That halt thy soul to tender thought
 And generous action move.

And still be lowly—bow thy head.
 Let wanton pride pass o'er.
 The heart that's meek and humble here
 Hereafter high shall soar.





THE OLD THORN

Look on the thorn-tree that doth stand
 Standing alone in the meadow-land,
Mary's a sweet and gentle maid,
 Mary's a sweet and gentle maid.

Often in springtide the maidens gay
Have gathered its flowers of red and white.
Often they danced on the first of May,
Under its shade in the morning light.

Often the mother laid there her child,
Wrapped from the dew in her mantle gray
While in the harvest-field near she piled
Sheaf after sheaf all the autumn day.

Then it was vigorous, tall, and young,
Stretching out boldly each laden bough,
With blossom, or leaf, or red fruit hung,
All withered, and bare, and leafless now.

Long years ago it had fallen down,
But that the ivy has girt it round,
Claspeth it close with its long arms brown,
Holdeth it up from the dewy ground ;

Creeps round the old branches every one,
Garlands them gay, with its large green leaf :
So have I thought would a duteous son
Stand by his father, in age or grief ;

When time shall have turned his bright eye dim
And stolen away his cheek's red glow ;
And withered the strength of his sturdy limb,
And silvered his hair like mountain snow.

So would he cling to the old man still,
Tender in word and duteous in deed ;
Thoughtfully, kindly, wait on his will ;
Watch o'er his weakness, work for his need.

Pass not unmoved by the old thorn tree,
Hung with its mantle of ivy fair,
One gentle lesson it readeth thee,
Of duty, and love, and pious care.





MAYING CYPRESS

*Come out into the meadow's green,
Sweet ones come away
The fairest wreath that ever was seen
I want to make today.*

The lambs are bleating down the lea,
The sun is shining bright,
The merry birds from every tree
Sing out with all their might.

There's not a wild geranium yet,
There's not a rose in blow,
But I can tell you where to get
The violets springing low.

I know the sunny bank so gay
With yellow primrose flowers,
The hedges white with blossomed May,
As if with snowy showers.

I'll bring you daisies tipped with red,
And golden kingcups too,
The hyacinth with drooping head,
The periwinkle blue.

And as you sort each pretty thing,
And as you sit and twine,
I'll tell you of a thought they bring,
Sweet little sister mine.

They grow about each common place,
In every hidden nook ;
Where busy man regards them not,
Or has not time to look.

Beneath his sight, beyond his touch,
In lowest place they lie ;
And no one careth for them much,
Perhaps, but you, and I.

Yet every little leaf they bear
Is delicately cut ;
And fashioned with most curious care,
To open, and to shut ;

And coloured with a perfect hue,
Though none should mark the stain,—
There's nothing little we can do,
I'm sure that's done in vain.

Each common flower that decks the earth,
Grows perfect in its shell ;
Each common action has its worth,
And we should do it well.

And not for love of earthly praise,
Since Heaven is over all,
And far from public haunts, and ways,
Fair grows the flow'ret small.

Then let us to the meadows roam,
And make our garlands there ;
Nor in our works and ways at home,
Forget their moral fair.





THE FARMYARD.

Lo, the sun is o'er the hill top,
Lo, the morning breaketh clear ;
Merry sounds of mirth and labour
Waken in the farmyard near.

There the cock sits on the barn door,
 Crowing merrily and loud ;
While his crimson feathers glitter,
 As he shakes his pinions proud.

And the brown hen walks below him,
 Picking grains up from the floor ;
Bring the fresh egg, bring it quickly,
 From her nest behind the door.

There the thresher bids good morrow,
 Leaning on his ready flail,
To the milkmaid, as she cometh,
 Poising on her head the pail.

By the dun cow meek, and quiet,
 She has set her stool so low,
And she sings a gentle measure,
 As she makes the white milk flow ;

Which the sweetly breathing creatures,
 Standing patient, love to hear,
Never lift the foot in anger,
 Never shrink aside in fear.

With his spade across his shoulder,
To the field the workman goes,
While the watchdog, *his* work over,
Seeks the hayloft for repose.

There, I see the horses harnessed,
Waiting by the empty cart ;—
All are cheerful, all are ready,
And a thought thrills through my heart ;

'Tis the idle that grow weary,
Gaily rings each busy sound ;
'Tis a pleasure to be active ;
There's a joy in labour found.

And I feel my blood run freer,
And I own it kind, and good,
That to man the law was given :
He must work to win his food.





THE CHILD'S GIFT.

THERE is a little berry black
It grows beside the wild ge-
Along the mountain lone

Where bright the heather blossoms bloom
And gaily grows the yellow broom,
And lies the loose grey stone.

The mountain children know it well,
And oft their blackened lips will tell,
And fingers purple dyed,
How many bilberries they found,
On bushes growing near the ground,
Along the dark hill side.

Far up the mountain solitude,
Within a cabin lone and rude,
The last low dwelling wild
That lies along that upland road,
Poor tenant of a poor abode,
There lives a sickly child.

His little cheek is sunk and white,
But every day an hour ere night
It colours like the rose ;
And then his very heart is sick,
And ever painfully and quick
His breathing comes and goes.

The wild broom blossoms every May,
It withers in the summer's day,
And ere it come again,
I think that flower so bright and lone,
As short a lifetime will have known,
And God will ease his pain.

A lady wandered by the place ;
She marked his wan and wasted face,
And oft would thither walk,
And read good books beside his bed,
And bring him apples rosy red,
And cheer him with sweet talk ;

Till in the bosom of the boy,
An impulse strong of love and joy,
And gratitude did stir ;
And to himself he said half sad,
"She maketh me so very glad,
What could I do for her?"

His sister from the mountain brought,
Where in the moss all day she wrought,
Of that wild fruit a store,

And smiling as she poured them in
His little hand so small and thin,
She kissed him o'er and o'er.

The poor child paused with glistening eye
Ere to his pale lip shrunk and dry,
The fruit he lifted up ;
Then from the rows upon the shelf,
Of white, and blue, and yellow delf,
He took his own small cup.

He hides his hoarded berries there,
“And they are for a gift most rare,”
(He to his mother tells,)
“For such, I'm told, do never grow
Where yon broad river runs below,
Round where my lady dwells.

“She comes, she comes, her step I know,”—
With what a bright and kindling glow
Light up his sunken eyes :
In his young heart what quick delight,
As fast outpoured, her hand so white
His purple present dyes.

Ah precious gift! love sweetly shown,
Since not by costly things alone,
Is grateful thought expressed ;
The motive not the means we scan,
And he who giveth all he can,
Hath surely given best.



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